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ABSTRACT

This booklet examines modern foreign policy based on deep-seated complexities of historical, cultural, national, religious, and racial practices and beliefs. In examining current policy issues, 'the web of the past' creates the deeply subjective sources of political behavior shaping events and conflicts. Chapters include: (1) "The Hard and the Soft"; (2) "The New 'Body Counts'"; (3) "The Large Coherences"; (4) "Role of Group Identity"; (5) "Nationality: The Ultimate Group"; (6) "New Thresholds"; and (7) "Implications for Policy." Monographs in FPA's Headline Series are published approximately four times a year and are intended as a resource for teachers and students in the foreign policy area. Each monograph: is about a world area or topic; is written by a noted scholar; is brief (usually 64 pages); is written to be highly readable; and includes basic background, maps, charts, discussion guides, and suggested reading. (EH)

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HEADLINE SERIES 246

FOREIGN POLICY ASSOCIATION

ED 414 236

Power AND Identity

Tribalism in World Politics

SO028995

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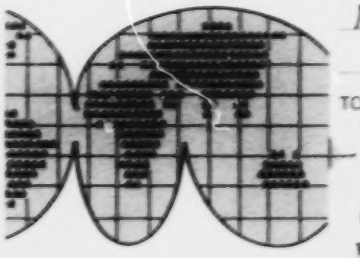

by

HAROLD R. ISAACS

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Power and Identity: Tribalism and World Politics

by Harold R. Isaacs

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The Hard and the Soft

In late 1978, the "sudden" eruption of a popular revolt against the shah of Iran caught the entire American policy-making and intelligence establishment by surprise. The movement that overthrew the shah had been gathering force for nearly a year. It was organized by *mullahs*—the Muslim equivalent of priests—based in mosques throughout Iran and was dominated from his refuge in France by the exiled religious leader, Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini. All the many different elements of gathering opposition to the shah, from ultraconservative to ultraradical, fell in behind this religious leadership. At Khomeini's call, millions of people came out into the streets, faced down the army's guns, forced the shah to leave the country, overthrew the

This is one of several issues of the HEADLINE Series, *dealing with international topics of special humanistic significance, whose publication over the years 1978–1980 is being assisted by the National Endowment for the Humanities.*

government he left behind, brought Khomeini back and installed him and the new government of his making in power, and voted in favor of establishing a new Islamic republic in Iran. In this process, the many different elements of the population that had come together behind Khomeini began almost immediately to break up into their separate parts to pursue their many differing interests, and the new shape of things in Iran waited upon the outcome of its new politics.

These events upset the fragile balance of political relations among the states of the Middle East and added to the jeopardy of a world economy dependent on Middle East oil. By pulling away one of the main props under the American position in the region, it put new and serious strain on the always-uneasy balance of world power between the United States and the U.S.S.R. President Carter, who just a year earlier had hailed the shah's regime as an "island of stability" and who supported the shah nearly to the end, now publicly complained that he had not been informed about the development of a situation so critical to U.S. security.

By far the most telling explanation for this embarrassing failure came from a Central Intelligence Agency official who told *The New York Times* on December 21, 1978 that "the agency found it difficult to take Ayatollah Khomeini seriously." It "faced similar problems," he said, "trying to assess the activities of other Islamic movements" elsewhere in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. A few days after the shah left Iran, *The Washington Post* reported that the White House had "ordered U.S. intelligence agencies to produce a worldwide study of Muslim religious movements."

A History of Costly Surprises

This painful and costly experience was hardly a new one for makers of American world policy. It repeated in its own way the no less painful and costly American failure to recognize the power of the nationalist drive in China and Southeast Asia, especially in Indochina, in the years following World War II. This produced a fateful misreading of the relationship between

nationalism and communism in the new Asian politics. Buttressed by even cruder judgments of what military force without an effective political base could achieve in these circumstances, this led remorselessly to disaster for American policy in China, to near-disaster and stalemate in Korea, and eventually to the American debacle in Vietnam.

The post-Vietnam shape of things in Asia proved to be even more "surprising," again because it was created by political behavior rooted in national, cultural, and in some cases racial chauvinisms and antagonisms many centuries old. The new cement of Communist solidarity proved much too thin to fill clefts such as those dividing Russia and China, China and Vietnam, Vietnam and Cambodia. Here, where more than in most places the words of Octavio Paz apply—"past epochs never vanish completely and blood still drips from their wounds, even the most ancient"—further surprises followed the painful shock of the defeat of American arms in Vietnam and produced new gyrations in American policy.

In 1970 U.S. forces bombed and invaded Cambodia as part of a war fought to hold a non-Communist "line" in Indochina against the Communist threat seen as coming from an expansionist China. In January 1979, less than four years after its defeat in that war, the United States found itself together in the United Nations with its newly recognized friend and would-be ally, Communist China, in opposing Communist Vietnam's invasion of Communist Cambodia. This twist in relationships even more grotesquely placed the United States in the position of nominally supporting the legitimacy of the Communist regime which had most gruesomely of them all confirmed the earlier American predictions that a bloodbath would follow any Communist victory in the region.

More careening turnarounds followed when, in February 1979, Communist Chinese troops invaded Communist Vietnam. This took place only a few days after Chinese Deputy Prime Minister Deng Xiaoping's successful journey to win friends and influence people in the United States during which he publicly announced that China would soon "teach Vietnam a lesson."

The U.S. government had to strain hard to deny Russian charges that it had connived in, or at least tacitly approved, the Chinese action. It was like a re-do of an old film with all its original actors shifted to play opposite roles; the effect was all but transvestite. To top it all, the Vietnamese invaders did not do all that well in Cambodia, where the undying hatred of Cambodians for Vietnamese, plus Chinese support, made it possible for Pol Pot's guerrillas to deny the invaders the complete victory they expected to win. Similarly, the Chinese invaders did less well in Vietnam than they must have hoped, drawing back after several weeks without having taught the Vietnamese any convincing "lesson" about anything except to confirm the undying Vietnamese conviction that China always was and still is the enemy.

In southern Africa, similarly blinkered values and judgments have been compounded even more than in Asia by underlying racial attitudes responding to the starkly black-white issues dominating the politics of the region. This led to prolonged *de facto* American alignment with surviving Portuguese colonial power in Angola and Mozambique and the white *apartheid* regime in South Africa. As explicitly set forth by Henry Kissinger in his policy recommendations to President Nixon in 1969—the well-known Option Two in his National Security Study Memorandum #39—the premise of this policy was that the whites were in southern Africa to stay.

Change came only after 1975 when revolution at home "suddenly" took Portugal out of Africa and white southern Africa was "suddenly" faced with Soviet-Cuban-backed black "Marxist" regimes on its northern borders. Only then was the problem of policy in southern Africa "suddenly" given new high priority in Washington. Only then did the United States and South Africa—after brief and abortive efforts to give military backing to rival tribes—move to see what yieldable space in Rhodesia and Namibia might still lie between the ultimately irresistible forces of black reassertion and the still assertedly immobile wall of the white power system farther south. In the summer of 1976, Kissinger himself shuttled between the edges of the black-white cleft which had so "suddenly" come so much

more clearly into view. He initiated the effort, ongoing ever since, to see if American diplomacy could somehow narrow the gap or at least position itself somewhere in the in-between as events moved on to some grimly painful future outcomes. Whatever else they entailed—intercontinental great-power strategies, gold, copper and other mineral resources—these outcomes were doomed to be shaped by issues of race, by the consequences of the ways in which white men have dealt with blacks in Africa in generations past and up to now.

The Web of the Past

Race in southern Africa, religion in Iran, a thick tangle of religion and history in the Arab-Israeli conflict—everywhere a web of historical, cultural, national, religious, and racial complexities of the past lies heavily on the present. No matter where one looks along the spectrum of affairs demanding American concern, these deeply subjective sources of political behavior press hard on the shaping of events and the making of conflict. Policy-makers who like to think of themselves as dealing with the "hard" facts of international political life—hard enough, it turns out, to identify and handle—are confronted more and more with the "soft" facts of human experience, remembrances of things past, emotions, perceptions, behaviors, so much more difficult to grasp, much less take effectively into account.

But as we go on now to examine these "soft" facts of international life and the ways in which they are woven into all our current affairs, a caveat: let no reader assume that if only we were more sensitive, less ignorant, less bound by our own historical and cultural conditioning, all these surprises could have been avoided, that all hereafter would be well, or at least better, or at least less damaging to us. There can be no doubt that even within our own limitations, American policy-makers of these years could often have been less myopic, exercised better judgment, and benefited from greater intelligence (in all senses of that word), and that if they had, we would be in somewhat better shape than we are now in dealing with the rest of the world. But there is a vastness and a depth to these matters that lie well

beyond the conjunctural particulars of this or that situation, a certain intractability about the problems they present as we try to make our way through our era of great change and the turbulence it brings with it. These are not just American problems, American failings, American failures. In all their varieties, these difficulties also confront the Russians, the Chinese, the Vietnamese, the Arabs, the Israelis, the Iranians, the Africans—everyone. We are all floundering around in the same flood and no one's dove has yet found solid ground on which to land. The best we can do is try to manage to take these matters into better account, if only by learning finally not to ignore them or continue misreading their meaning and importance; at the very least to avoid acting in ways that again and again weaken our ability to keep on trying to cope with them. This can only begin by our trying to see more clearly just what they *are*.

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The New 'Body Counts'

The "soft" facts of life we are dealing with here have to do with such matters as physical characteristics, name and language, history and origin, religion, nationality. These are the stuff of which group identities are made and group identities have become, more than ever before, the stuff of which politics is made, world politics and politics everywhere in the world. We are, and have been for all the lifetimes of this century, caught up in a succession of wars and revolutions bringing about a massive rearrangement of power systems, of the ways and institutions by which peoples and states are ruled. In this century, unlike the last, this has become more than a matter of which national power will rule what roost where in the world. Now, on both the largest scale and the smallest, superior military force by itself no longer readily produces desired political results. It is limited by the fact that peoples of every kind are in a whirl of change. They are trying to remain, maintain, become, reestablish, discover, or rediscover who and what they are, and to get, have, and hold enough power to sustain themselves in that identity, however they come to define it.

These matters press upon us in every sphere and at every level—global, regional, national, local. They are entwined with all the "hard" or "large" affairs of power struggle: geography, resources (especially energy), distribution of wealth, numbers, relative military power, relative economic capacity and leverage. They are at the core of all the "soft" or "small" matters of immediate experience of all kinds of human beings affected by changing political and economic pecking orders in old and new states on all the continents. They are part of the dynamics of virtually all current tension and conflict between groups and states on every scene, from the great intercontinental arenas of the superpowers to all the more obscure murky clearings in the world jungle where people in all their varieties are locked in more or less mutually murderous struggle for status, place, primacy.

A World Globalized—Yet Fragmented

This is hardly a new condition, indeed it is depressingly old. Differences in physical characteristics, language, history and origins, religion, nationality have produced the goriest aspects of most of human history. They have been part of the makeup and breakup and intermittent reordering of the centers of power within and among tribes, nations, empires. So it has been and so it is now, only more so, much more so. Far from dissolving under the impacts of modernization, as intellectuals of the Enlightenment tradition thought it would, this state of affairs, this essential nonbrotherhood of men, has persisted, seemingly an ineradicable part of the human condition. But as we approach the 21st century, it is compounded by paradox: a world globalized by science and technology is fragmented into its many different human parts contending with each other not less but more fiercely than ever before. "Progress" has meant mainly that these battles take place now not on dim and distant darkling plains but turn up brightly lit on all our television screens. They must all be flagged, moreover, on the situation maps in all our chancelleries. There are no deserts, no islands, not even any rain forests, far enough away to keep these collisions isolated from international

politics, no distances any more to keep between them and the rest of everyone else everywhere else.

"Progress" has also made these conflicts more lethal than ever before. Bloody as this kind of history has always been, the current chapter of it is bloodier still. Given the greater numbers of people, the unprecedented spread and scope of these collisions, and the much greater death-dealing capacity of modern weapons, the mutual massacring has been taking place on a grander scale than ever. Picking up in the immediate aftermath of the great bloodlettings of World War II and the Holocaust—the largest single and coldest-blooded ethnic slaughter of all—the new "body counts" swiftly ran beyond counting. It makes a somber catalog: mutual massacring of Hindus and Muslims in the partition of India, followed by three wars between Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan; tribal civil wars in Nigeria, the Congo, Chad, Sudan; four wars between Arabs and Israelis; Indonesians killing Chinese in Indonesia, Chinese killing Tibetans in Tibet, Malays killing Chinese in Malaysia; Indians killing Nagas in Assam; Tutsis and Hutus slaughtering each other in Burundi; Catholics and Protestants in Ulster; Muslims and Christians in Lebanon; Buddhist Sinhalese and Hindu Tamils in Sri Lanka (Ceylon); Sunni Muslims and Alevî (Shiite) Muslims in Turkey; Turks and Greeks in Cyprus; Kurds and Iraqis, Kurds and Iranians; Ethiopians and Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis; Papuans and Timorese and Indonesians; Arabs and black Africans in Zanzibar, Arabs and Berbers in Algeria; Christian Filipinos and Muslims in the Philippines, and so on and on and on. One attempt to count the "ethnic/cultural fatalities" in such clashes between 1945 and 1967 listed 34 "major" bloodlettings and hundreds of lesser collisions and came up with an estimated total of 7,480,000 deaths.

By now (1979) this total has surely more than doubled. Close to 2 million died in the civil war in Biafra in 1967–70. More than half a million dark-skinned Muslim East Bengalis were killed by light-skinned Muslim Punjabis and Pathans—fellow Pakistanis all—in the war in Bangladesh in 1971. At least 100,000 more Tutsis and Hutus have murdered each other in Burundi,

bringing the guessed total for these years to at least 300,000. Idi Amin's victims in Uganda, most of them in deliberate slaughters of tribal groups deemed hostile to him, have been counted as high as 300,000. The toll of the Filipino-Moro war in the southern Philippines has been put at 60,000. At least 50,000 have been killed in the Lebanese communal civil war. The most recent official figure of the dead in the Rhodesian guerrilla war was 16,000. In Chad, roving bands of black Christians and animists reportedly killed 10,000 Muslims during a few weeks' rampage in March–April 1979. In Turkey, riots between contending religious groups killed 1,000 early in the year. No one knows how many Cambodians, Meo, and Vietnamese killed each other in communal sideshow clashes during the American war in Indochina, quite apart from the casualties inflicted by the Americans (these too, in their way, "ethnic fatalities" as well) and quite apart also from the mass slaughters perpetrated upon their own people by the Cambodian Communists after their victory in that war or the Cambodians killed by the Vietnamese when they invaded that country three years later. No figures are readily available for how many died in the Portuguese war for colonial survival in Angola and Mozambique or in the tribal collisions that followed the end of Portuguese rule, or in the wars over Ogaden between Somalia and Ethiopia, or in the fighting between Ethiopian troops and Eritrean nationalists. To this communal toll must also be added the Vietnamese and Chinese refugees from Vietnam pushed back out to drown at sea in their leaking wooden boats by Malay Muslims, Thais, and others. No discharge in the eruption of these wars or collisions or atrocities lasts very long. Additions to this catalog may be found in any week's budget of news.

Small Wars and Big Powers

Tribal warriors confront each other in these wars with weapons they acquire, directly or indirectly, from their well-wishers, mentors, or would-be mentors, or client-seekers elsewhere in the world. The foot soldier seldom carries less than an automatic rifle while his army often disposes of lethal weaponry

on up through tanks and, as in Beirut, heavy artillery and rockets, and in some cases, supermodern aircraft. Examples abound in every conceivable combination of givers and receivers on every continent, but consider examples turning up in the news while these pages were being written (February–March 1979): The army of the shah that fell apart in Iran was U.S.-equipped to the top level of current military technology. Chinese troops, still using mostly Russian-made or Russian-style armor and weapons, invaded Vietnam, which had just invaded Cambodia with Russian and captured American weapons and was pursuing Chinese-supplied guerrillas. Another coup occurred in Chad involving the conflict between northerners supplied with Russian weapons by Libya and French-supplied southerners. Rhodesians flying old British aircraft attacked guerrillas in Zambia who had downed a Rhodesian plane with a Russian ground-to-air missile. The United States rushed planeloads of weapons to North Yemen to help stand off attackers from South Yemen, who were not only flying Soviet MIG-21s or 23s (said to be piloted by Cubans) but also supplying Russian weapons from Libya, including "SAM-7 ground-to-air missiles, road mines, rockets, machine guns," to "unruly tribesmen" in Yemen's desolate northern mountains. During Tanzania's war against Idi Amin, Tanzanian MIG warplanes bombed Entebbe airport and a Soviet supersonic bomber, sent by Libya to support Idi Amin, bombed a town in Tanzania.

Besides producing large body counts in "small" wars, this escalated weapon supply reflects the escalated potential of these small wars for growing into large ones by drawing in much larger contenders. In places that have importance on big-power maps, big-power interests tend to make use of this or that side in local conflicts just as, conversely, opponents in these situations find big-power-patronage profitable, even crucial, to their cause. There is even a certain shopping around by both patrons and clients, with swapping of partners not all that uncommon in these plays for tenuous advantage. This has always been the case, to be sure, in international power rivalries, but it is more so, and more dangerously so, now than ever before. We have seen its threaten-

ing auguries in Korea, Biafra, Vietnam, Bangladesh, the Sinai, in Angola and Ethiopia only a season or two ago, and again, early in 1979, in Cambodia and Vietnam and Yemen. These possibilities hover continuously over the unresolved war in Rhodesia. They could reappear in other places next season or the next or the next, e.g., in South Africa, where some of the most deeply laid of all the earth's faults have been pressing, rumbling, and now and again, as in Soweto, breaking out in small quakes at the surface.

But whether or not they threaten large external conflict, these basic group identity differences and collisions are shaping the internal politics of the change process everywhere, altering the political complexion of things not only in each country but in the whole surrounding area affecting international affairs. If we carry the listings down in scale from open warfare or large-scale massacres to ethnic/cultural conflicts marked by sporadic rioting, bombing or other outbreaks of terrorism, the list swells from scores to hundreds. If we add all the situations where tension and strain exist between and among groups with potential for violence in new political settings, the number could hardly be guessed. In this category we would have to include every country in which a changing political order has to try to strike new balances among contending tribal/racial/religious/national groups. This now means virtually every country on every continent, in the 50-odd "old" states, including our own, and the 90-odd "new" states of the world.

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The Large Coherences

This great shaking out of all power and group relations is global in extent. It has come about as a result of the collapse or weakening of power systems or larger coherences that for periods of time managed to hold their clusters of separate groups under the control of a single dominant group or coalition of groups. These systems created a certain order in which the differences and divisions were not so much submerged as held in their orbits by the gravity of the center. The force of this gravity was physical, economic, cultural and—most heavily—psychological. The rules of the game were incorporated into mystiques and mythologies of belief and behavior, e.g., all the assumptions of cultural and racial superiority/inferiority, which were internalized and accepted by all, rulers and ruled, victimizers and victims, and built into the system's institutions to keep it working. Such systems could work for given periods, producing not only selectively profitable economic well-being for the rulers and their chosen instruments among the lower orders, but occasionally even significant art and literature. But they could keep on working only so long as both the realities and mystiques of power were maintained, both externally and internally. They could last

for as long as they could overcome or stay in balance with challenging rivals outside and only so long as each dominated group inside not only knew its place but accepted it. The record shows that there could be all kinds of lags, that declines could take a long time and falls run long overdue, but that these conditions could never be indefinitely maintained. Under external or internal pressures—usually both—authority was eroded, legitimacy challenged, and in wars, collapse, and revolution, the system of power redrawn. Such, with all their differences, were the Ottoman, Habsburg, and Romanov empires which ruled most of eastern and central Europe, western Asia, and most of North Africa for upward of 500 years, and such too were the Western empires in Asia and Africa, ruling colonies all over the world for periods lasting from five decades to nearly five centuries.

The Political Centrifuge

The collapse and disappearance of these power systems, after 1918 and after 1945, threw the peoples of most of the world into the political centrifuge in which they still spin. Since the empires fell, no new larger coherences have effectively taken their place except perhaps in the cases of Russia and China where Communist power has in the Russian instance kept the Romanov domains intact and even extended them, and in the Chinese case not only reestablished the power of the center over all the old Chinese provinces but extended its rule by force over the onetime tributary, Tibet. In the larger international or global sphere, however, there are no new coherences, only new nuclear-powered power blocs which have failed so far to establish and sustain a balance between themselves, much less any balancing control over all the peoples who have fallen into their orbits. None of the proffered new coherences has worked. Neither the feeble European capitalist-victor coalition represented by the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations, nor its broader-based successor, the UN, could create a political system in which the power struggle of the major powers—in effect reduced in 1945 to two—could be contained, much less the conflicts of the

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greatly increased number of smaller states, with all their external and internal abrasions and collisions over national/racial/tribal/religious differences. Indeed, the Soviet and American power blocs that emerged after 1945 remained fragile and uneasy combinations precisely because of the revived strength of old nationalisms and the vitality of new drives to self-assertion and self-esteem. Despite bulging nuclear muscle, neither bloc could firmly count on keeping its bloc partners or its client states in anything resembling the older forms of proper subordination of the weaker to the stronger.

The superpowers have found, on the contrary, that they are unable to go very far in pursuit of their national/strategic interests in the world arena without being pressed, decently or otherwise, to respect the opinions of segments of mankind which ruling powers in the past could almost always ignore. They can compete with each other in space and try to avoid mutual disaster by at least talking about limiting their mass destruction systems. But in the world arena, where they have had to seek some new global solutions, arrive at some new arrangement of strategic positions and spheres of influence, they have both found affairs disconcertingly unmanageable. Like so much in our post-Churchillian universe, the use or threat of force as a prime instrument of any country's foreign policy is not the relatively straightforward business it once was, whether in grabbing off some desirable piece of foreign real estate or dealing with rival claims to the spoils. In those bad-better old days, power struggles between rival states more or less inevitably ended up in wars and the victors usually had marbles to pick up and enjoy for some decent interval of time. Now our rival great powers dare not go to war, at least not against each other directly, and 19th-century-style imperialist freebooting no longer works.

To be sure, the logic of power struggle remains the logic of force at whatever level. The standoff between the superpowers of this era is maintained by the balance of terror based on nuclear weapons. A world polity that would eliminate this is simply not in sight. The danger of the ultimate use of nuclear weapons remains the overwhelming fact of life-or-death in our time. To

this extent, the superpowers hold the fate of the planet in their hands. But this does not give them the power to control what happens meanwhile in all its many separate parts, and this is the rub. Indeed, the ultimate irony could be that with nuclear proliferation, the finger that eventually pulls a nuclear trigger may not belong to any supertribal Russian or American but to some minitribal warrior somewhere who will fire off the superweapon to serve some minigoals of his own.

Undependable Clients

The best that the superusers of force seem able to do meanwhile in their push-and-pull against each other is to recruit client regimes where they can, arm them, "aid" them, and hope they can stay on top of the crawling heaps of power-seekers over which most of them preside. This is the policy that says "yes, he's an SOB, but he's *our* SOB." It is not an exclusive American product, although after our experience with Chiang Kai-shek, Nguyen Van Thieu, Yahya Khan, the shah of Iran, and assorted Latin American despots, we are surely specialists in the mode. The Russians too have had and are still having their experience with it—in North Korea, Egypt, Cuba, Somalia, Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique, South Yemen, Afghanistan, etc.—and the Chinese keep their Pol Pot going in Cambodia's hills. The French, still holding on to post-colonial clients in ex-French Africa, Vietnam with its surrogate regimes in Vientiane and Phnom Penh, and even Libya's Qaddafi, with his Idi Amin, have tried to show that little fellows can play at this game too.

Through such clients, the sponsoring powers are subject to getting involved in "small" or "proxy" wars fueled by all the steaming soft stuff of rival tribalisms, with outcomes they generally cannot control and usually at the risk of losing more than they can gain. Instead of easily won, easily controlled and profitable colonies or spheres of influence, America and Russia must deal with post-colonial regimes capable at best—from the great-power point of view—of becoming expensive, unreliable, prickly, unpredictable, and worst of all, usually ineffectual clients. The rival wooing of the Americans and Russians has had

the effect of creating a remarkable range of choosable varieties of what is called "alignment," so often fickle, or "nonalignment," so often fictional, or something in-between, usually futile. The result is that despite billions in military and other aid programs doled out by both powers, no stable spheres have taken shape, no dependably docile dependents or securely pliant tools have been created. Within their own domains and in the large space that has opened between them, everything remains uneasily uncertain, all associations fragile and insecure.

In effect, no new large coherences have established themselves in these decades, neither in the great-power blocs nor in the ideological systems (e.g., "Communist" or "socialist") or political-religious groupings (e.g., "Islamic") that nominally transcend national boundaries. Nor has any been created by the great array of new international, hemispheric, or regional associations, institutions or agencies which can only mirror, not overcome, the many separatenesses of which they are made. They have been able to make at best only a feeble effort to deal with the great mass of human, social, and economic problems which can no longer be effectively met by single states acting alone. The most successful new international mechanism is probably the transnational corporation with its peculiarly selective ability to rise above parochial differences, but the transnational corporation, unfortunately, is not concerned with improving the human condition, only profiting from it.

What we continue to experience, then, is not the shaping of any new larger coherences but a world continuing to break up into its bits and pieces, bursting like big and little stars from exploding galaxies. Each one spins off in its own centrifugal whirl, each one strains to hold its own small separate pieces from spinning off in turn. The larger ones have a gravitational pull still too weak to create or hold on to new universes of their own; the small ones are strong enough to keep from being drawn into larger orbits but much too weak to establish effective orbits of their own. This is no easy scene to see clearly even if we try only, by way of summary and illustration, to distinguish some of its main features.

Post-Colonial: Fragmentation

The ex-empires have been carved into more than 90 new states since 1945, from huge India to tiny Oman to tiniest Nauru to newest St. Lucia. These new states came into being partly because the foreign rulers could no longer sustain their rule, partly because the ruled would no longer submit, and partly because colonial rule in the old manner had ceased to be profitable.

In a few places, independence crowned decades of sustained nationalist struggle, as in Congress-led India or Communist-led North Vietnam. In many more places, as in most of Africa, it came as a result of the more or less precipitous departure of the imperialists, as in what had been the Belgian Congo, or even—as in the case of most of French Africa—the cynical recognition by the foreign ruler that the name, if not the game, had to be changed at last. In British Africa, as in Ghana, Kenya, and a few other places, there was some earlier history of nationalist disaffection, but most of the parties and institutions that figured in the politics and governments of the new African states after 1957 had only been brought into being after 1948. In Portuguese Africa, independence came only after 13 years of nationalist-guerrilla war and a revolution at home that finally forced Portugal to withdraw, the first of the empire-builders, the last to go. Of Western empire in Asia, only Hong Kong and Macao remain, and they only because once-humble China chooses to have them survive.

Whatever its course and however it came, the victory of nationalism in Asia and Africa came late. The national state had long since exhausted whatever capacity it had ever had to serve as an effective political instrument for economic development and social progress. Throwing off the foreign yoke—or having it drop away—met the powerful need of the people in the colonies to regain some minimum self-respecting self-esteem. At this minimum, the new nationalists could at least replace the foreign scoundrels with local scoundrels and do away with the most egregious symbols of foreign cultural and racial superiority which had been at the core of the mystique of imperial power. In

the world they had never made, creating a new state power of their own was the only way offered to accomplish this much of their purpose. But the creation of new states offered only the most limited opportunity to attack the overwhelming problems of economic development and social transformation which all these people faced as they came out from under foreign rule. The governing rhetoric of Asian and African nationalism was the libertarian rhetoric of Europe's nationalisms of the previous century. But the new sovereignty brought with it liberty only from direct foreign rule, very little new equality, and almost no fraternity at all. The new day in the dawn's early light was quite bleak.

Virtually none of these new states had ever existed as separate states before, certainly not in their present form. Nearly all have boundaries inherited not from their own remoter past but from the colonial era, when boundaries were usually drawn without regard for what people lived where. Most of today's African state boundaries were quite arbitrarily drawn, for example, by Europeans and formally sanctioned at a meeting at Berlin in 1884. Colonies were set up as political/administrative units, usually inhabited by tens to scores to hundreds of distinct and mutually antagonistic peoples divided along many lines: regional, racial, religious, linguistic, tribal. With only one or two exceptions, these units were carried over intact in the transfer from colonial to sovereign status. This fact alone has dominated most of the politics and generated most of the conflict that has taken place in these countries during these decades. What had been the holy grail of self-determination in anticolonial politics became the poison potion of group conflict, secession, rebellion, and repression in the post-colonial era.

There are few real exemptions from this condition, even among those countries which experienced the period of Western dominance in a different way. Japan, no ex-colony, is nearly homogeneous, though not without its minorities. Reemergent China, on the other hand, has a lively "national question" of its own, with no less than half its territory—all the wide border regions along the southern mountains, through Tibet (which the

Communists took and hold by armed force), Sinkiang, Mongolia—occupied by some 60 non-Chinese minorities which make up no less than 10 percent of China's population. For Communist China, no less than for Kuomintang China or imperial China before it, these minorities present important internal political problems. China's minorities continue to have the Greater Han outlook of their Chinese rulers to deal with; in the present state of China's relations with Russia, the northern and western border peoples become a particularly pressing and even critical factor in external affairs as well.

In the ex-colonial countries, however, the populations are most generally mixed in more kinds and in larger proportions, indeed in almost every possible arrangement of majorities and minorities and mutually offsetting or unevenly grouped pluralisms, every variety producing its own kind and degree of conflict.

Thus India-Pakistan, to take a highly visible major example. It divided initially along the line of its largest division, India's Hindu majority and its Muslim minority, breaking apart amid massive slaughter and flights of populations in 1946–47, and clashing in two wars since. India was left with a Muslim minority of nearly 50 million, smaller numbers of Sikhs, Jains, Christians, and with other sources of internal tension, division, and conflict: its dozen or so strong regionalisms, its 15 major and some 50 minor language groups, its scores of major castes and thousands of subcastes, its almost 80 million Untouchables outside the caste system altogether. West Pakistan, itself made up of mutually tense or hostile Punjabis, Baluchis, Pathans, Sindis, and others, brutally imposed itself on its own Bengali East, ending in 1971 in wanton massacres, rebellion, the third war with India. It had taken rivers of blood to mark new boundaries separating the Muslim brothers from the Hindus. It took new rivers of blood to separate the Muslim brothers from each other.

These conditions, varying elsewhere almost infinitely in their mixes and their kinds, brought on most of the violence that filled the three decades following the end of World War II, the civil wars, uprisings and repressions, communal riots and massacres,

language conflicts, tribally rooted coups and counter coups, irredentist struggles, etc. Most of the divisions surfacing in these conflicts survive from the precolonial past, patterns of hostility and oppression with a long history. Certain others, however, were created in the colonial period by migrations, whether voluntary, induced, or forced. These included the massive transport of Africans into slavery, the movement of indentured or contract labor, especially from India, and the migrations, both old and new, of Chinese and Indians and Levantines to Southeast Asia, Africa, and island countries in both the Atlantic and Pacific. From these movements came a whole group of new population mixes, Sinhalese-Tamil in Ceylon, Amerindian-African-European in the Caribbean and Latin America, Malay-Chinese-Indian in Malaysia, East Indian and sometimes Chinese combinations with Africans, as in Guyana, Trinidad, Jamaica, or with Melanesians or Polynesians, as in Fiji and elsewhere in Oceania, and the presence of Chinese minorities, large and small, in Southeast Asia and the Caribbean.

Groups of still another kind, still more marginal than these, were produced by unions between colonial masters and colonial subjects, e.g., the Anglo-Indians, Anglo-Burmans, and other Eurasians, and Eurafricans, most of whom lived a pariahlike existence in their own narrow slice of the highly stratified colonial populations. These groups, as well as the communities of traders and laborers like the Chinese in Southeast Asia and the Indians in Burma and East Africa, usually became objects of hostility on their own account or became the helpless scapegoat victims of other intergroup tensions in the society after independence came. In certain cases, however, by virtue of their numbers, they became more than helpless or vulnerable minorities, as in Malaysia, where Chinese comprise nearly 40 percent of the population and live in an uneasy and brittle balance with the dominant Malays, or in Guyana, where East Indians, actually a numerical majority, are in a similar position in relation to the Afro-Guyanese. In both countries this has led to recurring mob violence and bloodshed and remains the main substance of unresolved questions of power in the post-colonial situation.

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In all these fragile new states, in sum, the new men of power have to discover how to create new national identities to go with the new national sovereignties they have just acquired. They have to discover how to protect themselves from the great-power rivalry that impinges on them all, how to achieve new economic development and overcome crushing poverty and backwardness. They also have to try to make coherent and viable societies out of the persistent and mutually hostile separatenesses of their conglomerations of peoples. Success at any of these tasks is not readily come by. There are no happy endings in view.

Post-Imperial: Europe

In Western Europe, which used to be the center of the world, the place from which the East was Near, Middle, and Far, and where, at Greenwich, time and longitude began, the post-imperial era did not bring on the collapse and revolution the Marxists had always predicted and the imperialists had always feared. Instead the Europeans found shedding that white man's burden more a relief than a disaster. With American help in the postwar years, they found they could make do in other ways, Britain a good deal less well than France, Belgium, or Holland, and none of them as well as the new Germany that rose, as did Japan, with such extraordinary speed from the ashes the old one had made. Trade, it turned out, could do very well without a flag to follow. There was some post-imperial lag. France fought on for its grandeur—a lot harder and more doggedly than it had fought the Nazis—in Indochina and Algeria, and de Gaulle kept its appearance in view, like a wax figure at Madame Tussaud's, for a few years more. Britain had to keep trying to pull in the few threads of imperial mantle it had left trailing behind it east of Suez and in the Mediterranean, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. Displaced from the world-power scene, the Europeans had to assure their own survival in the world-power struggle in which they no longer had the decisive role. This meant trying again to relate to each other in new and less lethal ways on their own small peninsula at Eurasia's western end. Some moves began toward creating the institutions of a new "Europe" to contain

and rationalize its strongly surviving national separatenesses. The latter remained dominant, however, and it seemed clear that for the foreseeable future any new whole "Europe" would continue to be weaker than its parts.

There were more "parts" to Europe now, moreover, than had been noticeable for quite some time. One striking consequence of the end of empire and world power for the Europeans was the weakening of the fabric of consent, assent, or submission that had kept subnational groups in some West European societies subordinately passive or less visibly discontented for centuries. Now hoary separatisms surfaced, new "national" movements or drives for regaining long-lost measures of regional, linguistic, or political autonomy, or simply for militant reassertion of this or that cultural distinctiveness. The rise of such movements among the Scots and the Welsh in Britain proved strong enough to force the government to submit a plan for limited "devolution" of powers to new local assemblies in both those areas, though not strong enough to command enough votes to win when a poll was taken on the issue early in 1979. Other examples: the reopening on a new scale of escalated violence of Protestant-Catholic hostilities in Ulster; the disaffection among Bretons and other regional groups in France and separatist terrorism in Corsica; the Flemish-Walloon conflict in Belgium; the nationalist-terrorist movement among the Basques and the still nonviolent but politically strong pressure for autonomy among the Catalans and other regional groups in post-Franco Spain; demands for autonomy or separation in the Madeiras and the Cape Verde islands—successfully achieved in the latter case—pressing upon the restored democratic regime in Portugal and even in Switzerland, model of pluralist tranquillity, disaffection among the French-speaking Jurassians in the German-speaking Canton of Bern; the rise of a strong nationalist separatist movement in French-speaking Quebec, forcing new division, or at least some rearrangement in the federal system of Canada.

Another fallout of the post-imperial experience in Western Europe has been the migration to the ex-mother countries of sizable numbers of their ex-colonial children—Indians, Paki-

stanis, Africans, West Indians to Britain; Algerians and Vietnamese to France; Indonesian Eurasians and South Moluccans to the Netherlands. These are not, as in the past, small numbers of selected individuals come for schooling in the process of being co-opted by the colonial system, but large numbers of poor working people come to make their way down those gold-paved streets to some better condition of life. The collapse of the old authority relationship in which the lesser breeds knew their place, the class of the newcomers and their status as permanent immigrants instead of tolerated visitors, and their larger numbers have led to new internal tensions, conflicts, riots in the streets in each of these countries. Old pretensions of relaxed attitudes about racial difference, especially in France, could not survive these new outbreaks of an old disease. These experiences have created new problems for the ex-spreaders of the higher civilization and higher culture and raised new questions they have to settle about the character of their own societies and the shapes of *their* pluralisms.

Post-Revolutionary: The Communist World

Marxist socialist doctrine promised a new international socialist world order to replace capitalist anarchy, imperialist oppression and nationalist rivalries leading to wars. In Russia the Bolsheviks promised a model of this kind of society, a political structure in which some of the hundred-odd nationalities in the country would enjoy territorial separateness and all would enjoy cultural and linguistic autonomy while sharing in some representative fashion in the central power. These promises were broken, precisely on the rock of the "national question" which never ceased to be a central issue in Communist theory and a very live issue in Communist politics.

Almost involuntarily from the beginning and then deliberately under Stalin, Soviet Russia became a national-Communist power. It subverted revolutionary movements elsewhere to its own national-strategic goals and policies. This took place with especially crushing consequences in Germany, China, Spain and France, aborting events that might have radically altered the

course of world history in the critical decades between 1920 and 1940 had they been able to run their course independent of Russian intervention. This is a history whose threads lead directly to the subsequent cleavage between national-Communist Russia and national-Communist China, each with the device of a new socialist world order still inscribed on its banner, each readily reviving racial myths—the "yellow peril" is more vividly seen in Russia today than it ever was in America or in Hohenzollern Germany—and each one's armed forces making ready to annihilate the other in the name of its own national-power interests.

National challenges to Russian dominance have risen repeatedly elsewhere in the Communist empire, successfully in Yugoslavia, abortively in Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia, adroitly in Rumania. The Soviet regime must continuously deal with nationalist pressures in the Baltic, in the Ukraine, in Georgia, etc. The same specter also haunts the international Communist movement, not only in Asia and Eastern Europe, but in Western Europe too. The declaration of independence from Soviet domination by European Communist parties at their conference in East Berlin in June 1976 was an event subject to many arguable interpretations. But in whatever uncertain measure, it was at core a reassertion of Italian, Spanish, and French national separateness, and an abandonment of the "internationalism" which in Communist parlance had long been nothing but a code word for Communist fealty and subordination to the Soviet Union. At face value, the Berlin declaration was the formal adoption by the European Communist parties of the national communism practiced in Russia by Stalin and his successors, in Tito's Yugoslavia, in Ho Chi Minh's Vietnam—retranslated by Ho's successors into a pact with Russia as a bulwark against China—and in Mao's and now Deng's China.

The most serious doubts or reservations about the West European Communist turn had more to do with the Communists' claimed conversion to democratic politics than with their rejection of control from Moscow. At its least, it was a recognition by West European Communist leaders that they could gain

politically only by stressing their national character. At most, it was a further breakup of the international Communist movement into its national parts, not entirely beyond comparison to the breakup of the international socialist movement into *its* comparable parts in 1914. The suggestive analogy to developments in the Roman Catholic Church was strikingly evoked by the Spanish Communist leader Santiago Carrillo, at East Berlin, when he said the Communist movement had been "a new church" to its followers and that Moscow had been "our Rome." Trying to keep it that way, he warned the Russians, would lead only to schism.

Inside the Communist countries, the promised new order has proved equally elusive. After more than 60 years of more or less monolithic Communist power in Russia and 30 years of the same in Eastern Europe, internal and intrabloc politics still largely revolve around ancient antagonisms and unresolved issues of relations between and among the scores of "nations" or tribes which make up the populations of these countries. The structure of separate republics and other nationality-centered institutions was set up and a charade of national political/cultural autonomy continues to be played in it. But the doctrinal line of respect for national/cultural differences keeps getting tangled with the lines of authoritarian central power. Nowhere have they fallen into a design which meets the needs either of the wielders of power or of the stubborn keepers of all the many primordial bonds. The problem was not resolved in Russia, not even in the three decades of the monolithic rule of Stalin—himself a prime theoretician on the "national question"—when whole peoples were uprooted and deported by fiat and literally millions condemned to die at the hands of the regime. Nor, since 1945, when it gained suzerainty over eastern and southeastern Europe, has Russian power been able to keep the added nationalities of its extended empire under effective control. Neither, for that matter, have the Communist regimes inside any of these countries. The politics of Czechoslovakia still revolve around being Czech and being Slovak—Russia's armed assertion of its power in that country in 1968 made full use of this communal division. In Yugoslavia the

aging Tito has tried desperately in his waning years to assure that the country would not explode again into its Serbian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, and other assorted parts. Rumania and Hungary still tussle over Transylvania, and every country uses the presence of national minorities in every other one—Albanian, Macedonian, Hungarian, or whatever—as a weapon in external pressures and counterpressures. This is the pattern not only on Russia's western frontiers but equally on the eastern, where Mongolian-Chinese antipathies are manipulated, and where, for another example, a "free Turkestan" movement has been set up to make use of the separatist restiveness of Turkic peoples under Chinese rule in Sinkiang.

Neither visionary beliefs, then, nor large-scale industrialization and urbanization, nor the passage of generations, nor concentrated centralized power, nor massive repression, nor elaborate theories, nor structural schemes have apparently been able to check the survival and the persistence of the distinctive separateness of the many nationalities or tribes of people who live under the Communist system. Socialist internationalism, like Christian brotherhood, remains an elusive myth mocked by the actualities. Resistance to Great Russian (or Great Serb or Great Czech, or Great Hungarian, or Great Rumanian, Great Han, etc.) still fuels conflicts and patterns of behavior little changed in essence from what they were in all the generations before the Communist era.

Post-Illusionary: The United States

The white supremacy system in the American society could not survive the collapse of Western white empires everywhere else in the world after 1945. Only in these greatly altered international circumstances did the long struggle for civil rights for blacks—and by extension for everyone else—in America finally reach the time of climactic decision in the highest court of the land in 1954. Laws imposing racial segregation were struck down. In what came to be called the Freedom Movement, both the legal and customary practices of discrimination and exclusion were directly challenged by black Americans who ceased submitting to the old

rules of the game and refused to accept the pace at which the society showed itself ready to alter them. This black reassertion ushered in a time of great change in all mutual perceptions and self-perceptions affecting not only blacks and whites but all members of the society grouped at different levels of a social and political pecking order, arranged so largely according to factors of race, religion, national origin.

This process of change in the American society—under way now for decades and still going on—is hardly less critical as a factor in American influence in world affairs than American economic and military power. To the extent that world politics involves a confrontation of totalitarian and democratic politics as models for human betterment, the crisis of change in American life becomes a crucial ingredient in both the making and the effect of American policy abroad. Against the shadowed *gulag* image of Soviet life and the ant-heap quality of life conveyed by the little we could see of Mao's China, the American scene in these decades has been one of a vast society, widely shaken from its illusions about its democratic state of grace, openly and stumblingly trying to deal with its own flaws and contradictions and to close the gap between its professions and practices bearing on equality of opportunity for all its citizens.

The turmoil of these years has come, however, not only out of the breakdown of old patterns of racial/ethnic/religious status and behavior but out of a far more inclusive erosion of moral, social, political and cultural norms of every kind. It has come out of persisting poverty and its consequences, rotting ghettos and beleaguered central cities, drugs, crime, polluted environments, and the inadequacy of the society and its government in dealing with it all. It has come out of the profoundly unsettling discovery that the industrial age has its limits, that not everything that comes out of smokestacks is progress, not everything that comes out of industry's waste pipes disappears; out of the deeply traumatic experience of the Vietnam war, which brought into question the common popular belief in the essential virtue, not to say the competence, of the use of American power in the world;

out of the Watergate scandals that ended with the unprecedented resignation of a President under threat of impeachment and shook the common underlying faith in the American political system itself. Amid tumultuous events across two decades, many old illusions about our society died or were laid low. In their place a new normlessness spread like the floodwaters of a great river into all domains of our national life. It made disaster areas out of what had been our more or less conventionally accepted notions about political institutions, family, education, sex, marriage, high and low politics, high, low, and lowest arts. The spasm of disaffection that took its most demonstrative form among a segment of the young over the issues of the Vietnam war in the 1960s actually cut far more deeply in the following years among people of all ages and every kind, people who had always thought they knew, or always unaskingly assumed they knew but now did not know or were much less sure of what they knew about anything, most of all about what it meant now to be "American."

This has come to be a cardinal question for every member of the society. It is difficult enough for all, but most difficult surely for those who in the past, for reasons of race, religion, or national origin, were relegated to the society's margins and who now demand the full inclusion which the society has always claimed to assure to *all* its members. This condition is changing the patterns of American politics and government at home and works its inescapable effects on American policy and action abroad. It is the American version of the group identity problem that has become such a large part of the common condition of so many people everywhere in the world. Its outcomes will have at least as much as new weapons systems, and perhaps a good deal more, to do with shaping the role America plays hereafter in world affairs.

4
Role of Group Identity

In all these places, then, and among their many different kinds, massive displacements are occurring. The relative position of virtually every people on earth has been shifting in some way in relation to others. All the lights, angles, shadows, and reflections by which people see themselves or are seen by others have moved or are moving. All postures and styles of behavior are in some way ceasing to be what they were and more or less convulsively becoming something else. And all of this takes place more and more in the political arena.

Out of the breakup of old power systems or the fragility of new ones comes the onset of chronic turmoil and instability. Out of this turmoil come the fears and confusions that surround us and the increasingly desperate reach for security. For great masses of people this means trying to get back to a condition of life in which certain needs are met, to get behind walls that enclose them once more, if only in their minds, in a place where they can feel they belong and where, grouped with their own kind, they can regain some measure of what feels like physical and emotional safety. Hence the lunge for tribal turfs, for national separateness, no matter how feeble or fragile the sovereignty it provides. Hence the swelling power of surviving and currently reviving traditional

religions and, at all their margins, the attraction of more or less extreme cults in which individuals can lose themselves, a consummation found by many others in drugs and assorted other old and new nostrums that promise the individual tranquillity or satisfaction.

Hence also the great potential drawing power of charismatic political leaders, legions everywhere awaiting the appearance of their Caesars. It is one of our more hopeful current facts that so relatively few have so far turned up and have been for the most part stunted figures. Here again, and by no means accidentally, our more recent examples of the power of charisma have centered on religious figures. Even for political leaders of the order of a Hitler or a Mao, huge crowds had to be marshaled and drummed into place on all needful occasions, but in 1979 it took simply the presence of the Pope to draw out millions of the yearningly pious in anticlerical Mexico and in Communist Poland. And not since Gandhi have we seen anything to compare with the combination of religious and political charisma achieved by Iran's distinctly un-Gandhi-like Khomeini. He coupled the roles of surrogate God's Messenger and revolutionary leader to summon from afar millions to march under his banner of a revived traditional Islam. They marched together only briefly, it is true, but for long enough to topple the shah.

What we saw in Iran—as we had already seen in India and Pakistan, Lebanon, Ulster, in the Arab-Israeli conflict, etc.—was another example of how *religion* could serve as the mobilizing focus in a political conflict that obviously also involved many other elements. Such is the case as well where we read of *racial* or *tribal* collisions in Africa, *language* conflicts in Belgium, Canada, etc., or of *historically* rooted antagonisms, as in China, Vietnam, Cambodia, for example, which give the past a powerful, sometimes dominant influence on contemporary political behavior; or when we deal, as we all must now every day of our lives, with issues of politics in which the key words are *national, nationalism* or *nationality*.

These, again, are the elements of basic group identity: physical characteristics, name and language, history and origins, religion,

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and nationality. They are holdings every person everywhere in the first instance acquires at birth by chance of the family into which he or she is born at a given time in a given place, and which then become subject to all the shaping circumstances of the present. These elements do not exist separately but in a cluster. They are entwined and inseparable in a highly fluid and dynamic relationship to each other and to the politics in which they figure. This cluster, moreover, is not a static and sculpted object but a live thing, changing shape and size and arrangement of its parts under varying conditions. Of these the most decisive are the political conditions, the measure of power or powerlessness in which the particular group identity is held. How dominant is the group or how dominated? How static are the conditions or how changing? These become the governing questions and they are essentially questions of politics, of the push and pull among different groups that share the given scene.

How these holdings are seen and celebrated by their holders has provided the substance of most of what we know as history, mythology, folklore, art, literature, religious beliefs and practices. How the holdings of others are seen and dealt with has provided most of the unending grimness of the we-they confrontation in human experience. So it has ever been and so, we suggest here, is it more than ever now, in our time. It is precisely such rearrangements of power and we-they confrontations that we are experiencing now on such an unprecedentedly global scale.

These are not matters which can be discussed adequately in brief or in the large. Each case, one finds, develops its own shapes, its own dynamics, its own peculiar intensities and effects. There is not much about the study of the interaction of basic group identity and political change that can be reduced to some single formula or be symmetrically arranged. The various elements show up in different relative roles and with widely varying specific gravities, and these are often modified by impinging new circumstances. We shall be able here only to suggest in barest summary some of these varieties and illustrate them with examples from among the many that

confront us as political problems both at home and abroad.

Physical Characteristics

The element of race was of course close to the heart of the colonial experience, and the deeply laid effects of the white superiority assumptions by the colonial masters had much to do with the nationalist drive of peoples to regain self-rule. It gave its special edge to the anger and humiliation of subjection, a feeling and an experience not erased by the pulling down of one flag and the raising of another. Adapting it to the new circumstances is very much a part of the new politics and of all the new relationships, not only between whites and nonwhites, but between and among the several varieties of nonwhites with their own patterns of racial attitudes and behaviors.

The stark black-white confrontation still dominates the struggle for power in southern Africa, although here too black tribal differences show through wide cracks in the current politics in the antiwhite guerrilla movement in Zimbabwe Rhodesia, and in Namibia and South Africa where the white rulers have tried calculatedly to exploit tribal differences among blacks as one way of relieving black pressure on the white power regime. But racial or physical differences, marked along shadings of relative darkness or lightness as well as other features (e.g., shortness or tallness of stature in Burundi) figure in many other more marginal ways in many other places. They appear in the civil wars in Chad and the Sudan. They figure in the hostility between Vietnamese and Cambodians, Malays and Chinese, Afro-Guyanese and Indo-Guyanese, and in many other instances. They turn up, subtly or crudely, among the many varieties of Latin Americans, bearing on degrees of European, Indian, and African ancestry. They have produced "new" problems for the white populations of ex-imperial England, France and Holland. And, far from marginally, they continue to play their role in the working out of new mutual relations and attitudes among the different kinds of people who make up the American society, again not only as between white and nonwhite but among the varieties of nonwhites as well.

Language

Language often turns up at the center of many group conflicts, usually serving as prime symbol of other divisions but often carrying great weight itself as the bearer of a cultural tradition that a group is trying to preserve or revive. Changes of the name to go by—country names, group names, individual names—have themselves been a dramatic reflection of the political changes of these years; names are seldom the heart of the matter but they can often lead one directly to where the heart does lie. Language issues as such, however, have appeared in fresh or revived forms in the politics of "old" Europe and America and "new" postcolonial Asia and Africa. Old language loyalties (e.g., Basque, Catalan, Breton, Welsh, etc.) have reappeared in varying intensities and become part of new political movements. New language strains have appeared even in multilingual Switzerland and again, as of old, around the edges of old irredentisms along the frontiers of Austria and Italy. Old bilingualisms have generated new levels of hostility and political confrontation, as in Belgium and Canada. New pressures for bilingualism have turned up out of the seams of ethnic division, especially those created by heavy immigration of Spanish-speaking peoples into the English-speaking culture of the United States.

Such issues have arisen in their sharpest forms, however, in the postcolonial world where the languages left behind by the colonial "mother" countries still so largely dominate the modernizing elites in societies with dozens, scores, even hundreds of distinct language communities. Some of these, with their own territorial bases, become the focus for local struggles for autonomy or more, with politics revolving around resistance to imposition of new candidates for national languages, as in India, the Philippines, Indonesia, etc.

History and Origins

The deep imprint of history and origins lies heavily on groups and individuals everywhere in the confusion of our contemporary politics. It can appear as the most powerfully positive centerpiece

for the Chinese with their Great Past, shaping how they see and deal with all those barbarians, Asian or Western, who live "outside" in the noncentral countries of the rest of the world. At the other rare extreme, it can appear as the most crushingly negative centerpiece for the emerging ex-Untouchable in India who wants to blot out his past altogether. In most societies, history goes on being molded and remolded by each generation's needs, forever being enlisted and reenlisted to serve new legitimizing, self-reinforcing, self-enhancing, self-rationalizing functions required by newly shaped political interests.

In each case, political change calls for some new ways of dealing with the past and its legacies. This is no small part of the present political culture of countries like Germany and Japan, forced by crushing defeat in war to come to new terms with many deeply imbedded conceptions of their national identities. The ex-imperialists of Western Europe have had to adjust to their shrunken status and make their way back somehow to the business of becoming, as Raymond Aron said France had to become, content to be merely "the guardians of [their] own culture." On the other hand, among all the hitherto ruled, dominated, and demeaned peoples of the world, the recovery of local sovereignty, however limited and ineffectual, opened the way to recovery of self-esteem through rediscovery and reassertion of their own sources of pride in the past. They had to erase its minuses, resurrect or, if need be, recreate its pluses, to regain, reassert, celebrate once more their pride in all that went before, as far back to the beginnings as they could take it.

Examples of this are without end. Even Russia, still something of a cross between an industrial giant and a backward country, went quite recently through the phase of claiming Russians had invented everything of importance in modern technology, a claim on which the Chinese, of course, had long had a prior hold. Turkey's Atatürk provided another notable example in the post-World War I era when he proclaimed, in 1935, that it had been a Turk, facing the sun at civilization's dawn somewhere in Central Asia, who uttered the first word ever spoken by a human being, thereby inaugurating all language, all culture. More

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recently, in one of the moves reflecting the ill-judgment that finally overtook him, the shah of Iran in 1976 abandoned the Muslim calendar that begins with Muhammad in A.D. 622 and moved the beginning of Iran's time-counting back another 1,180 years to the founding of the Persian empire by Cyrus. The reach is always for beginnings, the search is always for greatness, if not "big" greatness then at least little greatness, if not one's own greatness, then at least reflected greatness. Thus the evocation of ancient African empires, of the ancient glories of India, indeed of any glow from the past in which, as under light from distant stars, more recent blemishes can be less harshly seen or even blurred from view altogether.

While some try to build self-esteem by evoking a past of lost greatness, others have to try to do so by wiping out a past of real lowliness that is still very much with them. Such is the case of the emergent ex-Untouchables in India and their less well-known counterparts in Japan, the outcasts, or *burakumin*. For generations, blacks in America dealt in this way with slavery and their African origins, all but a few doing their best to forget or ignore a past they deemed shameful. By contrast, in our own years in the great flush of change and emergence, American blacks have begun to seek not to erase their past but to rediscover it, seeking to reestablish those sources of pride and self-acceptance so largely lost to them during the centuries of their submergence, both in America and more remotely in Africa. Jews, on the other hand, are a people who have had little more than their religiously rooted history to sustain them. It alone serves as a basis for their survival through millennia of travails culminating in the Hitlerian Holocaust. Paradoxically, in their regained statehood in Israel, where they seek to reestablish their biblical heritage, surviving Jews from all over the world have found that the question of questions, besides survival, is, Who and what is a Jew? Their answer to this question waits on their ability to withstand the hostility that still surrounds them and to resolve their conflict with the Arabs over the land.

Like the Jews, the Chinese are also the possessors of a Great Past, indeed, in the not-very-humble opinion common among

them, the Greatest of all Pasts. Unlike the Jews, who spent some 2000 years dispersed, subjected, debased, persecuted, ending in slaughter of half their number, the Chinese remained rooted in their continental land, enjoying great imperial power and prestige rising and falling in dynasties lasting centuries at a time. They suffered weakness and humiliation for barely a century at the mercy of the Europeans and later the Japanese. To put an end to this weakness and humiliation and reassert Chinese pride and power became the goal of all the recent politics of reform and revolution in China, from the abortive Taiping Rebellion in the 19th century to the successful Communist revolution in the 20th. Thus the theme that runs consistently through all the vagaries of Mao's thought, the theme of the great age and ageless greatness of the Chinese people, "with a recorded history of 5,000 years . . . one of the oldest civilized countries in the world . . . with a glorious revolutionary tradition and a splendid historical heritage." The Chinese, he wrote, "have always been a great courageous, industrious people. It was only in modern times that they have fallen behind . . . Our nation will never again be an insulted nation. We have stood up." Whatever else Mao's successors may reject of his legacy, this view of their Chineseness remains theirs as well as his and is imbedded in the way they relate to the rest of the world. "Standing up" is what they thought they were doing early in 1979 when they invaded Vietnam to "punish" it for not accepting Chinese tutelage. In much the same way, the Vietnamese were reflecting a similar view of *their* history when they "stood up" as doughtily to the Chinese as their forebears had done for a dozen centuries past. Looking on from afar this time, Americans could muse over their own recent history in this corner of the world and marvel at how little they knew about it.

Religion

As we scan the group identity conflicts that crowd the contemporary world scene, it becomes clear that in one degree or another, religion figures in virtually all of them. It usually appears combined with other factors of great weight in politics—

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class, race, land, resources, nationality, history, power—often as the thrusting point, the sharp edge, the mobilizing spur of political action serving many different ends. Or it can similarly be the badge that marks off friend from foe, a symbol of life or death for so many, as in India, Pakistan, Ulster, Lebanon, who may never have wanted any part themselves of the battle for power raging around them. It can play a central role, as it did in Iran, but even here too as an initiating, contributing, or covering force for other interests as well, whether Marxist, Islamic radical, bourgeois, or Kurdish, Turkomen, Arab or Baluchi nationalist. Varied as its weight may be in each case, however, religion appears as a key element in most, if not quite all, of the conflicts brought on by the decline and collapse of old power systems and the lunge to create new ones.

As with all these matters, there is much more to be said here than can fit into this space. Traditionalist Islamic movements and dreams of some form of Pan-Islamic politics have for many decades been in conflict with forces of modernization and with fragmented nationalisms and other dynastic, sectarian, or ethnic divisions in Muslim countries from Morocco to Indonesia. The new impetus to Islamism provided by the Iran events touched, via oil and geography, virtually every other national interest everywhere else in the world. In the Arab-Israeli conflict, religious differences suffuse the complex history out of which the encounter takes place, including the European Holocaust which had so much to do with bringing the new Jewish state into being. As the holy city for Jews, Christians, and Muslims, Jerusalem symbolizes the central—if not the governing—role that religion plays in this contest for place and power which, because of where it takes place, engages the vital interests of much larger world powers. Different in character but no less large or complex or weighty in world affairs is the example of the ferment of these years in the Roman Catholic Church, with its profound impacts on so many societies and their politics, especially in Latin America and Eastern Europe.

Never quite alone then, whether in larger or smaller settings, always important if rarely in itself decisive, religion now figures

in dozens of recent or ongoing conflicts in all parts of the world. Whether centrally or marginally, it defines differences between clashing groups, generates friction, summons up political and military forces, commands popular support or submission in this or that cause, and, at the very least, simply identifies the combatants. Besides the already mentioned cases of Hindu-Muslim mutual slaughter in India, Protestant-Catholic in Ulster, and Muslim-Christian in Lebanon, some other examples:

▶ The civil war in Sudan was fought between the dominant Arab or Arabized Muslims of the north and the Christian or "animist" black southerners.

▶ The still unsettled civil war in Chad is between Arab-supported Muslim guerrillas from the north and the predominantly Christian or "animist" and black south.

▶ In Nigeria, the Biafran civil war of 1967–70, fought over a complex of regional, tribal and economic issues, was touched off when black Muslim Hausas in the north massacred thousands of mostly Catholic black Ibos.

▶ In Cyprus, the unsettled conflict lies between Orthodox Christian Greeks and Muslim Turks.

▶ In Sri Lanka, intermittently bloody clashes take place between members of the Sinhalese Buddhist majority and the Hindu Tamil minority.

▶ In Burma sporadic civil war goes on between the dominant Buddhist Burmese and the Christian Karens, and others, Chins, Kachins, Shans, etc., who have religions of their own. In early 1978, more than 150,000 Muslims fled from Burma into Bangladesh, driven, the reports said, by Buddhist persecutors.

▶ Buddhist Thailand has to deal in its southern border provinces with a Muslim separatist movement.

▶ In Malaysia, politically dominant Malays maintain Islam as the state religion, their Muslim and exclusionary practices intensifying their differences with the large non-Muslim Chinese minority.

▶ In the predominantly Catholic Philippines, the government is at war with the Muslim Moro minority which seeks to control

territory it has always considered its own and carries on armed struggle with the help of nearby Muslim Malaysia. In early 1979, there were reported to be 100,000 Philippine Muslim refugees in neighboring Malaysian Sabah.

▶ In Turkey in late 1978 more than 1,000 persons were reported killed in clashes between Sunni Muslims and the Alevîs, a Shiite Muslim sect. Sunni-Shiite clashes are periodically reported in Sunni-ruled Iraq.

▶ In Pakistan deaths numbering from hundreds to thousands have been reported periodically in clashes between the majority Sunnis and a dissident sect known as the Ahmadiyas.

▶ In Iran in 1979, armed autonomy-seeking challenges to the Shiite Khomeini regime came from the Sunni Kurds and Sunni Turkmen in northwestern and northeastern Iran, and from the Arabs in the south.

Religion also figures in contemporary politics, of course, in ways that go far beyond armed clashes between believers of this or that creed. In Latin America, the Catholic Church functions both as a source of support for entrenched regimes and as a mobilizing force of resistance to them. It is caught, as Pope John Paul's visit to Mexico showed, in the bind of resolving just what its political role should be. In the Communist countries, where religious institutions have been kept under state control, religion has continued to serve informally as an alternative force commanding faith and loyalty, e.g., among Russians who continue to attend Orthodox or other churches, among Roman Catholics in Poland and the Baltic countries, in the Soviet Muslim populations, and in recent years among Soviet Jews. A variety of religious complexes and complexions have much to do with shaping the politics of the Jewish state of Israel and of the 42 states with Muslim populations now confronted with being or becoming more or less "Islamic," according to their many versions of what that might mean or be allowed to mean in their various societies and political systems.

5

Nationality: The Ultimate Group

We come finally to the most inclusive and most explicitly political of all the elements of basic group identity: *nationality*. In its many definitions and usages—a complex and confused array—the "nation" or "nationality" appears as the ultimate, even the terminal form of all the elements of group identity brought together. The nation, wrote the late Rupert Emerson, is "the largest community which, when the chips are down, effectively commands men's loyalty . . . it is for present purposes the effective end of the road for man as a social animal, the end point of working solidarity between men." Other groupings have played this role, the family, the tribe, religious communities, but "all of these, without vanishing from the scene, have bit by bit, often after harsh struggle, yielded pride of place to the nation in the sense that for constantly growing numbers of men the claims of the nation have come to be accepted as taking priority over claims from any other source." It is "the community

which makes the nearest approach to embracing all aspects of their lives." The "nation" is the most persistently surviving unit of political organization in human affairs. It remains so in a world that has outgrown its limitations and can no longer afford its drawbacks and dangers but cannot create any effective substitute for it. Since it is politics—relative power or powerlessness—that decides the fate of any community of people, nationality is in the end the most critical of all the identifications an individual carries as part of his group identity.

The Meaning of 'Nation'

Considering how universally important it is to every person, just what we mean by "nation" remains remarkably imprecise. Many scholars and writers have tried for generations to say just what a nation is, but there is no commonly agreed definition. Each one has offered his own list of the parts that go into the making of a nation. Give or take an item or two, they generally include all the elements of what I have called the basic group identity, usually mentioning shared culture, history, tradition, language, religion, adding territory, and sometimes "race." On closer examination, however, it appears that no theoretical formula is able to indicate what is indispensable or dispensable in the making of nationality and no one can say in what combinations they have to appear to meet all "national" requirements. This uncertainty about the meaning of "nation" or "nationality" has been reflected and compounded by the way these words have been used, whether in official, legal, scholarly, or common parlance. In one context or another, "nation" has been used interchangeably with "tribe," "people," "ethnic group," "race," "religion," "country," "nationality," and, most commonly and confusedly of all, with "state," which alone signifies political sovereignty. Distinctions are variously made among and between these terms, having to do with differing notions about size, territory, "stage of development" or measure of "backwardness," the level of "consciousness" or, in the end, just how the particular user feels about it.

The facts, past and present, seem to suggest that the formula

whereby a "tribe" or a "people" do or do not remain or become a "nation"—in the sense of "state"—depends mainly on the conditions of power or the lack of it, and the given political circumstances of the time. To everyone except readers of the fine print of realpolitik, the World War I peace settlement at Versailles promised "self-determination of nations," presumably to all. As the victors rearranged the map at the expense of the vanquished, new "nations"—or states—were carved accordingly out of the lands of the defeated Central European empires, each new "nation," to be sure, made up of a mix of subnationalities, each of which in turn dearly wished to become a "nation" on its own. But the Versailles formula was not considered to apply at all to the multitude of "nations" locked into the colonial empires of the Western powers or even to the colonies and protectorates taken over by the victors from defeated Germany and Turkey; when some of them—in India, Java, Indochina, Morocco—tried during the 1920s to exercise the right of self-determination, they were put down by main force, as they also were in semicolonial China. One world war settlement later, the UN went the League of Nations one better and proclaimed the universal right of "self-determination of peoples," but its application to colonies remained ambiguous and here again, in the event, the issue was decided not by any abstract principle but by who was presiding over what liquidation of what political system and putting what new one in its place. No formula about what constituted a "nation" or a "people" was applied to any specific outcome, only the concrete circumstances of the forces in play on the spot at the time.

Only this explains why after World War II, the ex-colonies in Asia and Africa were for the most part simply converted from quite arbitrarily established colonial administrative conveniences into "nations," or, more accurately, into states, most of which contained dozens, scores, even hundreds of "peoples" who think of themselves as "nations" and would be glad to have states—i.e. sovereignty—of their own. No formula, only particular conditions and power relations could explain why in the years after 1945, Indonesia, a land of many "peoples," could remain intact

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while India had to be partitioned, amid bloody massacres, mass panic and migration, into two states, Hindu India (with a large Muslim minority and dozens of linguistic and regional divisions remaining) and Muslim Pakistan; or why this Pakistan, itself a patchwork of "nations" with dreams of being states on their own: the Punjabis, the Pathans, the Baluchis, etc., could become a state while Nagaland, with *its* patchwork of separate tribes, could not; why the Pushtus of Pakistan could not have their own Pushtoonistan or the Baluchis their Baluchistan, at least not yet, while the Bengalis could, after years of bloody conflict and a bloody amputation, finally achieve their own separate Bangladesh. Not any question about their nationality but only each one's concrete situation and relationships could enable little Gambia and tiny islands like Fiji, Nauru, Grenada, the Seychelles, and most recently St. Lucia and the Gilbert Islands to become independent states while big Biafra, after a costly civil war, could not; why Rwanda and Burundi could become separate states while Eritrea, still fighting for the chance, could not.

Tiny Abu Dhabi could become a state without swinging a single scimitar while the Kurds—who meet just about every classic definition of what a "nation" is supposed to be and have been fighting vainly for generations to establish their own Kurdistan, could not. Like almost every other people, the Kurds are divided into many Kurdish parts, but even more unfortunately for them, their traditional territory lies divided in parts of what are now Iran, Iraq, Turkey and the Soviet Union. No fall of the political cards has ever gone their way. They have fought in and around these many border regions for many years with arms and means supplied—and then cut off—by a succession of nondurable sponsors at various times (including the Soviet Union, the United States, the shah's Iran), all to no avail. At this writing the Kurds of northwestern Iran have taken to arms again, trying to gather some grains of autonomy for themselves out of the harvest of Ayatollah Khomeini's revolution. In Iran, the Kurds suffer additionally from being a Sunni Muslim enclave in a Shiite Muslim country. "We fought in the revolution not out of religious conviction," a Kurdish religious leader told an

American reporter. "We want autonomy, our own parliament, our own language, our own culture." The Turkmen in the northeast, the Baluchis in the southeast, and assorted other groups, Arabs, Qashqais, Lurs, Bakhtiaris, were all stirred by the fall of the shah to seek some new separate status or rights for themselves under the new regime. Iran thus provided in microcosm a striking example of the centrifugal effect of the collapse of an imperial larger coherence.

An Explosive Century

The history of world politics during the last two centuries has consisted primarily of the increasingly explosive appearance, disappearance, and reappearance of "nations" or states, successive wars and revolutions changing their placement and displacement in relation to one another and to the distribution of resources and power. Our own century's share of this history has been far the most explosive, erupting wars and revolutions changing the political landscapes across the entire globe, occurring virtually without interruption decade after decade from 1914 until now. Every aspect of this history—sketched earlier in these pages as post-colonial, post-imperial, post-revolutionary, and, in the United States, post-illusionary—has been dominated in every place and at every turn by the problems of nation, nationality, nationalism.

These impinge on every individual person's existence. They press their reshaping forms on all our group identities and on the politics created by them or by which they are created, whether in our more and more numerous Lilliputs or our more and more threateningly powerful Brobdingnags. The impacts make Yahoos of us all, not regardless of but precisely because of our many colors, creeds, and national origins which do not yield to any higher shared human order of things or accommodation of differences, but fragment and confront each other more and more in ever more separate and hostile ways. Some of the loftiest spirits and best minds of many generations have struggled to see how it might be otherwise, but the "nation" and "nationality"—serving as mantle for all the other apparently irrepressible conflict-

producing differences among human beings—have continued to best them, century after century. Despite much eloquent doctrine and earnest aspiration and even occasional examples by a few, all men continue not to be brothers, even in a time when some minimum measure of brotherliness, like it or not, seems to have become a requirement for survival.

6
New Thresholds

This brings us back to that great paradox with which we have to learn to live, the paradox of ever more globalizing power and technology in a world of ever more fragmenting politics. At some point these mounting quantities become changing qualities. Even if we are fortunate and they do not lead to any "big" eruption anytime soon, the "small" eruptions that keep taking place certainly do produce big changes in the political landscapes where they occur in the fragmenting politicians' countries, and thereby, to whatever calculable or incalculable extent, alter the political topography of their regions and of the world. The new shape of world politics is made out of the sums of all these evolving multiplying parts. The paradox rolls over itself, the fragmented pieces become all together the globalizing whole.

The Sums No One Can Add

These sums, one must say again, are made not only of the computable "hard" stuff—power, geography, resources, etc.—

but also of the "soft" stuff of what happens to people, how their needs, impulses, states of mind do or do not get translated into behavior and political action. These include all the needs and drives that bear on the complexities of group identity, belongingness, self-esteem and autonomy. These are elements that no one yet knows how to program into any computer. They are becoming sums no one can add up. Still, in one degree or another, differing vastly in particulars from place to place, they are now the substance of politics everywhere, playing a role in the process of revising, reshaping, remaking every changing society, every political system. There is no formula for order in the way we can think about this inherently disorderly process. It is ongoing, open-ended, and in most cases no one can be sure what way stations lie ahead, much less what destination.

One thing to do in the face of this formidable confusion could be to murmur a mantra and meditate, and this is, indeed, what a great many people are doing. With at least an equal chance of some useful outcome, one can also try to consult the past, look for light in political theory, or, finally, peer harder into the kaleidoscope of current actualities to try to see better than we do now just where our present thresholds are.

The Testimony of History

History tells us for the most part that the problem of diverse populations has usually been "solved" politically by the imposition of pecking orders by some group or groups on others, and that such pecking orders are maintained by varying measures of physical, psychological, cultural force. A good part of the human story has to do with the making, the breaking, and the remaking of such pecking orders in all sorts of shifting varieties and combinations. Thus the empires, ancient and modern, and all the many different political mechanisms they devised along the way to serve the ends of control by dominant over dominated groups, e.g., the nationality policy of the Habsburgs, the millet system under the Ottomans, the communal electorates created during the last years of British rule in India, etc. All these systems, all these devices, ought to be looked at afresh now to discover any clues

they might offer to a better grasp of what confronts us now. It may not be necessary to go to the past just to discover all over again that pecking order systems of one kind or another seem to be the only available ways of arranging power relations among diverse human groups. If one goes looking for models of some more humane, just, equitable distribution of political power among such groups, the pickings will be predictably lean. But these may be prejudices rooted in too much awareness of past history. One ought to look anyway.

The View of Political Theory

The fields of political theory are not much greener. Modern Western European and American political theory was and still is largely rooted in ideas that came to us from the Greeks through the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. It became a body of theory and conception that assumed that what was meant to emerge from the primeval ooze was some kind of universal man, that backward and ignorant human tribalism would give way to advancing knowledge and reason and that all human beings would join together to assure the common weal.

This belief, an article of faith for democratic idealists, became dogma for Marxist socialists. But, as we all know, this is not how it worked out, either for democratic idealists or Marxist socialists. The national state became the Western world's maximum extension and refinement of tribalism. It proved to be the "end of the road" as far as any common weal went, whether capitalist weal or socialist weal. The dream of universal man drifted away in visions of a commonwealth of man, a "world government" or of "world federalism" and came no closer to creation than a League of Nations, a UN, mirrors of the current society, not instruments for changing it. On the socialist side the vision of a proletarian international brotherhood became an unstable cabal of national-Communist states.

The world of states remained a jungle, while within each national state, the old tribal ways survived, flourished, and remain alive and well to this day. They thrive on all political diets, capitalist/socialist/mixed or Communist/authoritarian.

Pecking orders continue to govern in our societies not only in the realms of wealth/class but also by categories of race, region, religion, language, origin, nationality, or varied combinations thereof.

Political theory has for the most part resolutely looked away from all this, staying on levels of abstraction that could remain least disturbed by the actualities. The leading works by American political scientists in the 1950s and 1960s on the subject of nation-building in the postcolonial countries scarcely ever mentioned, much less considered, the problems created by the crowded and contentious diversity of their populations. They continued to assume that what they called "modernization" would take care of all that. In social science literature generally the term "group" has been muddied into a blur that until quite recently avoided making any distinction between the nature of primary ties linking people and all the secondary groupings and associations into which they also move. The term "plural" or "pluralism" often employed in this general area has remained, like all significant terms describing these relationships (e.g., race, tribe, nation), vague or so variously defined that its usage confuses rather than clarifies.

The current flow—already nearly a flood—of new literature on this subject reflects the new "ethnic consciousness" in many ways. It is still most useful not where it advances any new so-called theory but where it begins to look more directly at what is, to provide a framework or a focus through which to see more clearly where the new thresholds are in this matter of political change and racial/ethnic diversity. Starting points for such an exercise are all around us, especially in those countries that give us a chance to compare developments on this score along different cultural and political dimensions, say, as in Nigeria, India, Malaysia, China, Canada, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, the United States. What new pluralisms, what new pecking orders are being created? And most critically of all for our future, how do these patterns bear on the character of political institutions? How do they bear on the survival of democratic politics, now largely confined to the North Atlantic region, versus the further

spread of authoritarian political control systems which now govern almost all of the rest of the world? There are not likely to be clear answers to such questions coming along any time soon, but the questions themselves are sure to become more familiar and more pressing.

7
Implications for Policy

What are the implications of all this for the shaping of American foreign policy?

Regrettably, there is no single, simple, or clear answer to this question either. Indeed, it is not easy even to frame any multiple, complicated, or unclear answer to it. There are now more riddles wrapped up in more enigmas in world affairs than were ever dreamed of in Winston Churchill's universe. Most of what we have been calling the soft stuff of contemporary world politics is not accessible to our foreign policy, especially not in the sense of being subject to its control. We do not and cannot control most of what happens in most of the world's politics, least of all by force. All of our Presidents and all our Presidents' men have been finding this out for some 25 years now at heavy cost in lives, treasure, and national self-esteem.

We not only cannot control the evolution of societies and cultures undergoing great change but we also cannot control what happens even in the case of so vital a resource as oil, the energy source that makes most of our wheels go around. To a critical extent—about half of our consumption and much more than half in Western Europe and Japan—oil is produced in

countries most of which are weak and even archaically backward in terms of modern development. Only day before yesterday, this would have been a problem "solved" by superior armed force imposing political dominance. Not so today, again partly because Soviet and American force cancel each other out in the most critical arenas, but partly also because under the new political dispensations of our time the stronger cannot—as he once could—simply take what he wants from the weak. This is not because of any access of virtue but because of the new relationship of forces in play. If this be progress, we are painfully limited in what we can make of it.

The fact is that now, instead of bullying and trampling his way to what he wanted, as President Teddy Roosevelt did to get his canal in Panama some 75 years ago, President Jimmy Carter had to put through a treaty turning control of the canal over to Panama and in order to do so had to beat down the opposition of a sizable band of latterday Teddy boys in the American Congress. Similarly, instead of launching a war, as President James K. Polk did in 1846 when he wanted something Mexico had—in his case the rather large stretch of territory from Texas to California—President Carter had to go to newly oil-rich Mexico and listen gamely while the Mexican president upbraided the United States for its insulting disregard of Mexican sensibilities in the past. The *macho* image of the gringo—which has grated for so long on the nerves of the macho-loving Mexicans—can still be maintained only by American politicians without responsibility for conducting American affairs. Our policy needs now require us to outgrow the childishness of machismo and to hope, as we do so, that the Mexicans do too.

Studying Foreign Cultures

Does this mean that what we have to do is get into better tune with the needs and especially the sensibilities of other peoples in order to have a more successful foreign policy? The first flush answer to this is Yes, of course we do. Heavy-handed ethnocentrism and chauvinism may have made successful empire-builders

in their times out of the Chinese, the Greeks, the Romans, the British, but it is not much help to us in our world in our time, which is not an empire-building time. In 1947, when Britain was shrinking back into a place which saw the sunset every night, a special commission looked into British capacities to deal with people they did not rule. It made the dismaying discovery that while the British educational system had been turning out generations of colonial administrators, it had produced very few serious students of the languages, cultures and people who were being administered. In our own case, we inherited the mantle of world-power responsibility in an age of collapsing empires and fragmenting societies and we had even less cross-cultural experience and knowledge. Our missionaries were by definition professionally culture-bound. Our few anthropologists were professionally committed to studying other cultures only as far away as they could find them from any polluting contact with contemporariness and change. Our policy-makers and diplomats in general did not concern themselves with that large part of our world ruled as colonies by Europeans.

In the new era, along with Point Four, the Peace Corps, and tens of billions of dollars in foreign aid, we created a great variety of area studies and exchange programs to acquaint more Americans with what lay out there and to train some of them to work in these new vineyards. We now have libraries full of their books and dissertations. We have Asian and African studies associations crowded with more or less distinguished scholars in many disciplines. There are also tens of thousands of individuals from these countries who have traveled and studied in the United States, and although many chose to stay, many did return to take part in affairs at home. We have no way of judging the results of all this enterprise or knowing the full impacts of these mutual experiences. But if we look at the state of our relations now with South and Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Middle East after more than a generation of these many-sided efforts, their positive effects are not spectacularly apparent.

Difficult as it may be for international understanders to understand, the fact is that knowledge and personal experience of

other cultures, meaningful as they may be for the individual, are not applied in a vacuum of good intentions but are subject to the context of shaping political forces and events. It has to be recalled that the State Department began in the 1920s to train Chinese and Japanese language officers for the Foreign Service and turned out at least a few notably able men, some of them sons of missionaries. Their presence, however, did not prevent our relations with China and Japan from slithering on into the wars and disasters of the decades during which they served. This obviously does not mean that it is not helpful for policy-makers to be knowledgeable people or to have some around as helpers. It does mean that they cannot ensure successful outcomes. Nor, it has to be added, does greater knowledge and contact necessarily produce friendlier or more successful relations between people. As a close associate once said of Thomas E. Dewey: "You have to know Tom very well to dislike him." Knowledge of others, even sympathetic knowledge, does not and need not and most often should not produce admiration, not to say romantic idealization. Because there is so much wrong with our society does not mean there is so much right with other societies, especially with any of the many assorted tyrannies over minds and bodies by which we are now surrounded or any of the cultures which are credited with being less material or more spiritual than ours. They are not. Or less crass or less corrupt. They are not. Getting to know more about other societies is essentially the process of shedding witlessly-held delusions about them, whether plus or minus.

It may be, as some of our international understanders insist, that too many Americans are out of tune with people of other cultures and that this is our problem in dealing with them. But it must also be said that there is a great deal in other cultures, and even more in other politics, that is seriously out of tune with us, not simply at crude material or with-us-or-against-us levels, but in such matters as human rights, status of women, dissent, freedom of religion, the principles and practice of the rule of law, equality of economic and educational opportunity. In all these respects, we are certainly still far from being as free and open a society as we profess to be, but the gap between our professions

and our practices is much narrower than the gap between our practice and that of a large part of the rest of the world. As President Carter's attempt to be serious about human rights so painfully showed, fitting these differences to the effective conduct of foreign policy is no simple matter.

Getting along successfully in the world unfortunately does not mean getting in step with other peoples who yearn after a freer, more humane existence, but for the most part with regimes based on such things as the gulag, thought reform and mass control systems, military dictatorships or satrapies, caste, religious fanaticism, absolute monarchy, or other forms of more or less absolute one-party or one-man rule. The nationalist struggles against empire in our era all had the legend of European-style freedom inscribed on their banners and its principles were enshrined in the basic documents of the UN to which all subscribed and to which fealty is sworn at international gatherings every year. But almost nowhere in the post-colonial world has any such freedom been established and almost everywhere its opposites prevail. Most of this post-nationalist tyranny has come out of conditions rooted in these societies, including their racial/tribal/linguistic/religious/regional diversity. But our own "SOB" and military-centered policies and near-pathological fear of political radicalism have had much to do with this evolution in the more recent post-colonial areas as, indeed, they had long done in so much of Latin America. To this extent we share responsibility for the plight we are in; our recent experience with the shah of Iran carried this kind of myopia and ignorance to a new extreme. We do have to coexist with undemocratic and antidemocratic regimes in the world, but surely the experience of these years should have taught us by now that we cannot allow any critical interest of ours to depend on their survival.

Democracy—the Crucial Fact

Many things—issues of power, economics, and the use of the new technologies produced by life-creating as well as life-destroying science—will govern what kind of America will exist in what kind of world in the time to come. But if our behavior in

world affairs is to have more for its object than our own sheer brute survival, it has to be based on the maintenance of the democratic and open society that we are trying to create. This is the most crucial "soft" American fact of all. The model of the democratic open society is what we counterpose to the assorted models of closed and closing societies that now rule in most of the world. The model of inclusiveness and shared rights with accommodation of differences of race, origin, religion, is the model we counterpose to the deeply bloodied we-they tribal fragmentations and national conflicts that are now tearing the globe into so many pieces in a time when it needs more than anything else to exist as some kind of tolerably functioning whole.

Most of the politics created by this fragmentation may be, as I have suggested in these pages, inaccessible to the direct impact of American policy and action abroad. The best we can hope to do is to be aware enough of its particulars not to stumble over them as we have been doing and to take them into account as we pursue our own interests. But in a far more ineffable way, this world condition *is* accessible to the impact of American behavior at home. During these years when so many societies in the world have been coming apart in the centrifuge of retribalizing politics, the American society has been struggling to integrate itself, to see if we can finally begin in reality to assure all the different kinds of people who are Americans the equality of status and opportunity which they have always in theory enjoyed. We are engaged in trying to see whether the common holdings of a shared *American* group identity can provide the setting in which different kinds of people can coexist with some decent mutual respect and acceptance instead of tearing each other limb from limb, to see, in short, whether we finally can create a *one* that will preserve the *many*.

It has to be one of our greatest "soft" assets that the goals and values of our society—modern, secular, egalitarian, humane—are those professed by virtually everyone everywhere who still looks to the future rather than to the past for human betterment: the totalitarians keep calling themselves "democratic" and every

regime, even Khomeini's, claims to rule in the name of the "people." Limited and qualified as its achievement might still be, the American society has come closer to realizing these goals than any other has yet managed to do. The question is where we go from here. In these years of turmoil and change, all our democratic professions have come under acute and constant and aggravated challenge. The way we deal with this challenge will determine the direction we take, the kind of society we become. It will be this struggle and its outcomes—the "soft" quality of American life—which will, along with all the "hard" stuff of our size, strength, resources, shape the American position in world affairs. The shape of much of the rest of the world's politics will be influenced in critical measure by what we make of ours.

Talking It Over

A Note for Students and Discussion Groups

This pamphlet, like its predecessors in the HEADLINE Series, is published for every serious reader, specialized or not, who takes an interest in the subject. Many of our readers will be in classrooms, seminars or community discussion groups. Particularly with them in mind, we present below some discussion questions—suggested as a starting point only—and references for further reading.

Discussion Questions

In his opening chapter the author says policy-makers "like to think of themselves as dealing with the 'hard' facts of political life," and find the "soft" facts "much more difficult to grasp." What does he mean by hard and soft, and why should the latter present more difficulty to statesmen?

Do you agree or disagree with the author's view that "we would be in somewhat better shape" in our relations with areas such as Vietnam, southern Africa and Iran if greater attention had been paid to the "soft facts"? Why does he use the qualifying word "somewhat"?

Chapter 2 presents a picture of "a world globalized by science and technology" and yet "fragmented into many different human

parts contending . . . more fiercely than ever before." Do you think the uses modern society has made of science and technology, on balance, have lessened this tendency toward fragmentation and conflict, or made it worse? Explain your view.

Chapter 3 reviews the dissolution of the "larger coherences" of the 19th-century empires, and finds that "no new large coherences have established themselves." From what you know of recent history, how well do you think the author makes his case in the different regions he discusses? Do you think new efforts to establish such "coherences," through the UN, regional organizations, "the imposition of pecking orders," or any other, are likely to succeed? What should U.S. policy be on this question?

In what ways does what the author calls "the American version of the group identity problem" differ from the shape that problem takes elsewhere in the world? What do you think of the connection he makes at the end of the last chapter between this domestic problem and the American position in world affairs?

Describing the different components of group identity discussed in chapter 4, the author finds *nationality* to be "the most inclusive and most explicitly political." How does it relate to the other aspects discussed, and which of them do you think is most influential in today's world?

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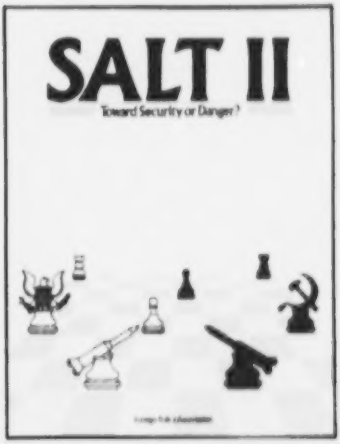

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